

**Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board**

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**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY BOARD
San Francisco State University
Burk Hall #28
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco CA 94132**

**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PRACTICE COMMITTEE
January 15, 2005
MEETING MINUTES**

Committee Members Present

James Till, Ph.D., Chairperson
Sherry Washington, M.A.
Bruce Gerratt, Ph.D.

Committee Members Absent

Vivian Shannon, M.A.

Staff Present

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer
Candace Raney, Staff Analyst
Lori Pinson, Staff Analyst
Ann Bollenbacher, Board Staff
Albert Balingit, Legal Counsel
George Ritter, Legal Counsel

Board Members Present

Rebecca Binge, M.A.
Marcia Raggio, Ph.D.
Alison Grimes, Au.D.
Diana Verdugo, M.S.

Guests Present

Jody Winzelberg, California Academy of Audiology
Jane Moir, Los Angeles County Office of Education
Dennis Van Vliet, Audiologist

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Till called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

II. Introductions

Those present introduced themselves.

III. Discussion of Requirements for Bachelor Degree Applicants to Complete Field Work Experience at Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Training Programs In Order to Qualify for Registration as Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

Chairperson Till provided the background to the issue of bachelor-degree holders qualifying for registration as speech-language pathology assistants (SLPA), and the requirement that bachelor degree applicants complete field-work experience at a Board-approved SLPA training program. He stated that the previous meeting minutes, dated October 25, 2001 and included in the meeting packets, reflects the Board's prior decision and rationale as to the need for bachelor-degree holders to complete SLPA field-work requirements. He further stated that the Board recently received an inquiry from a master's student enrolled at California State University, Fullerton in the speech-language pathology program who is concerned that her undergraduate training in speech-language pathology, which includes 90+ hours of clinical training, is not considered sufficient to be registered as an SLPA.

Ms. Del Mugnaio explained that the letter submitted by the interested party was not dated but was received in the Board office sometime in early December 2004. She explained that the letter is just one of many inquiries received in the Board office regarding this matter. She stated that often bachelor-degree holders call the Board insisting that their speech-language pathology undergraduate training far exceeds the training available to SLPAs. However, some undergraduate students admit that they receive much less than the 70 hours of clinical training required for SLPA registration.

Chairperson Till stated that the Committee is discussing the merits of the issue on two levels: first, does an individual who possesses a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology, without having completed field-work experience, have equivalent qualifications to someone who has graduated from an SLPA program? and, second, should an individual who has a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology and 70+ hours of undergraduate clinical training qualify for registration as an SLPA? He noted that the Committee had already decided that the bachelor's degree alone did not meet SLPA registration requirements. He stated that the undecided issue was whether the undergraduate clinical training was equivalent to SLPA field work, recognizing that the SLPA field-work preparation focuses on the supervisor/assistant reporting relationship and educates students about the practice limitations of support personnel, whereas the undergraduate clinical training prepares students for independent practice.

Mr. Gerratt stated that the laws and regulations are clear for SLPAs and that, regardless of whether the clinical training preparation reiterates the laws and regulations, registrants must comply. He stated that he is not convinced that bachelor-degree applicants are going to violate the law because they are not instructed of their limitations as SLPAs in the undergraduate clinical training.

Ms. Washington stated that the individuals would not be doing so knowingly, and that she has encountered many situations in which individuals operate beyond their scope of responsibility unknowingly or because they are instructed to do so by their employer.

Ms. Washington inquired whether the undergraduate clinical training offers the breadth of experience offered in SLPA field-work training. She suggested that it might be a reasonable decision to grant bachelor-degree holders who possess clinical training registration as SLPAs, provided that their clinical training is, in fact, equivalent and exposes the student to diverse clientele and practice settings. She stated that although modifying the existing requirements might create an avenue for registration and assist with alleviating shortage situations, it should not be considered if it diminishes existing registration standards.

Ms. Bingea inquired whether the person who wrote the letter to the Board was provided with the history of the Board's discussion on the matter.

Ms. Del Mugnaio responded that the individual was provided with the relevant history and with notification of the agenda discussion.

Ms. Del Mugnaio explained that the current process for determining the equivalent qualifications of an out-of-state applicant seeking registration as an SLPA is to require the applicant to submit their transcripts to a board-approved SLPA training program for review. She suggested that if the Committee determines that the existing regulations should be modified to allow bachelor-degree holders with a minimum of 70 hours of undergraduate clinical training to qualify for registration as SLPAs, the process could be similar, in that the clinical equivalency could be determined by the SLPA training program directors or designee(s).

Chairperson Till reiterated that the existing issue remained as to whether or not the undergraduate clinical experience is equivalent to the prescribed diversity in the SLPA field work.

Mr. Gerratt commented that the SLPA regulations do not specify required field-work training in different settings or with various age groups.

Ms. Del Mugnaio explained that the regulations do require compliance with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Guidelines for the training of SLPAs, which includes the detail of field-work experience. She stated that she did not have the document at the meeting for review.

Ms. Washington inquired as to how many bachelor-degree holders are interested in seeking SLPA registration and are impacted by this existing barrier.

Ms. Bollenbacher responded and stated that she received an average of about ten telephone calls a month from bachelor-degree holders who are upset that their training does not automatically qualify them for SLPA registration.

Ms. Washington stated that the difficulty in seeking the SLPA training might be a geographical issue as there are very few training programs located throughout the state.

Ms. Bollenbacher reported that currently some of the SLPA training programs may grant credit to bachelor-degree holders for their undergraduate clinical hours and subsequently require the individual to make up a specified number of hours in the SLPA program in order to certify the individual's field-work completion.

Mr. Gerratt commented that the equivalency model may already be employed and that the regulations may be outdated.

Mr. Ritter provided draft language for the regulation amendment that create an equivalency clause for clinical experience completed by undergraduate students.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that there is a section in the regulations that needs to be deleted regarding bachelor-degree coursework requirements, as the language is not in concert with the law.

M/S/C: Gerratt/Washington

The Committee voted to recommend to the Board to amend the speech-language pathology assistant regulations Section 1399.170.11(b) to provide a field-work equivalency for bachelor-degree holders and to delete the obsolete regulations regarding the additional bachelor-degree course work requirements.

There being no further discussion, Chairperson Till adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer